

# Barking Frog

*Hylactophryne augusti*  
Family Leptodactylidae



Adult



Young

**Global Rank:** G4

**State Rank:** S1 (AZ); S2 (NM)

**Distribution:** The barking frog (also known by the genus *Eleutherodactylus*) extends from southeastern Arizona and southeastern New Mexico to central Texas, and south through central and western Mexico to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. In Mexico, it ranges from near sea level to 8,900 ft. (2,710 m.). Distribution is spotty. There are at least three subspecies: western, eastern, and Mexican. In Arizona, it is only known from a few specimens from the Santa Rita and Pajarito Mountains, and these are the northern extension of the western subspecies. In New Mexico, it is considered a relic, disjunct population of the Chihuahuan Desert, and is only known from isolated locations in Chaves, Eddy, and Otero Counties. The only established populations are near Carlsbad, New Mexico.



*Current range of the barking frog*

**Description:** Adults reach up to 3.75 in. (9.5 cm.) in snout-vent length. The barking frog is toadlike in shape, but toes are slender and unwebbed, with prominent tubercles beneath the joints. It has folds of skin across the back of the head and a circular fold on the belly. Eardrums are smooth and semitransparent. Coloration is greenish to light brown above, marked with dark blotches that often have light borders. Eggs are a conspicuous brown color. They walk in a stilted fashion with the hindquarters and heels well off the ground. Young have a distinctive light band across the back. Adult males are much smaller than the females. The voice resembles the bark of a small dog with a series of rapid yapping notes.

**Reproduction:** The peak of breeding activity occurs in April and May, with possibly a long and complex mating pattern. Eggs are laid in a cluster in a small cavity in soil under rocks, especially during periods of rainfall. Eggs are large yolked and unpigmented. The egg clusters may include up to 67 eggs, and need moisture to hatch. The males remain with the egg clusters and may provide needed moisture through excretion. Young emerge fully formed after metamorphosis is completed within the egg.

**Food:** Food habits of the barking frog are largely unknown. However, it is known that they will eat camel crickets and land snails.

**Habits:** The barking frog is a secretive, terrestrial, and often rock-dwelling species, frequently found in limestone areas. It hides by day under rocks and in mines, wells, caves, and fissures. It ranges from treeless, dry, yucca-covered hills or brushy woodlands to open pine forests.

**Management Implications:** Although the family is well represented in the American tropics, the barking frog is very rare in the

United States, and the only known established population in the West is near Carlsbad, New Mexico.

**Important References:** Stebbins, R.C. 1985. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. The Peterson Field Guide Series, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY; Degenhardt, W.G., C.W. Painter, and A.H. Price. 1996. Amphibians and reptiles of New Mexico. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM.